

# KENTUCKY SUPREME COURT

Justices	 Christopher Nickell	 Debra Lambert	 Samuel T. Wright III	 Laurance VanMeter	 John Minton	 Lisabeth Hughes	 Michelle Keller
Confidence Score	Mild Democrat	Mild Democrat	Indeterminate	Mild Republican	Indeterminate	Indeterminate	Mild Democrat
Opinion Partners							
Dissenting Minority							
Determining Majority							
Lone Dissenter							

- ▶ Number of justices: **7**
- ▶ Number of cases: **200**
- ▶ Percentage of cases with a unanimous ruling: **92.5% (185)**
- ▶ Justice most often writing the majority opinion: **Justice Michelle Keller (15)**
- ▶ Per curiam decisions: **129**
- ▶ Concurring opinions: **8**
- ▶ Justice with most concurring opinions: **Justice Michelle Keller (3)**
- ▶ Dissenting opinions: **17**
- ▶ Justice with most dissenting opinions: **Justice Laurance VanMeter (4) and Justice Michelle Keller (4)**

## COURT CONTENTION

### Opinion partners

In 2020, the Kentucky Supreme Court decided three cases 5-2. No justices consistently allied in dissent.

### Dissenting minority

In 2020, the Kentucky Supreme Court decided two cases by split decision. No justice dissented in both of the cases decided by split decision. Therefore, it is not

possible to discern a dissenting minority with the existing data.

### Determining majority

Justice Lambert was the only justice in the majority in both cases decided by split decision before the Kentucky Supreme Court. There was a different majority in each case. Therefore, it is not possible to discern a determining majority with the existing data.

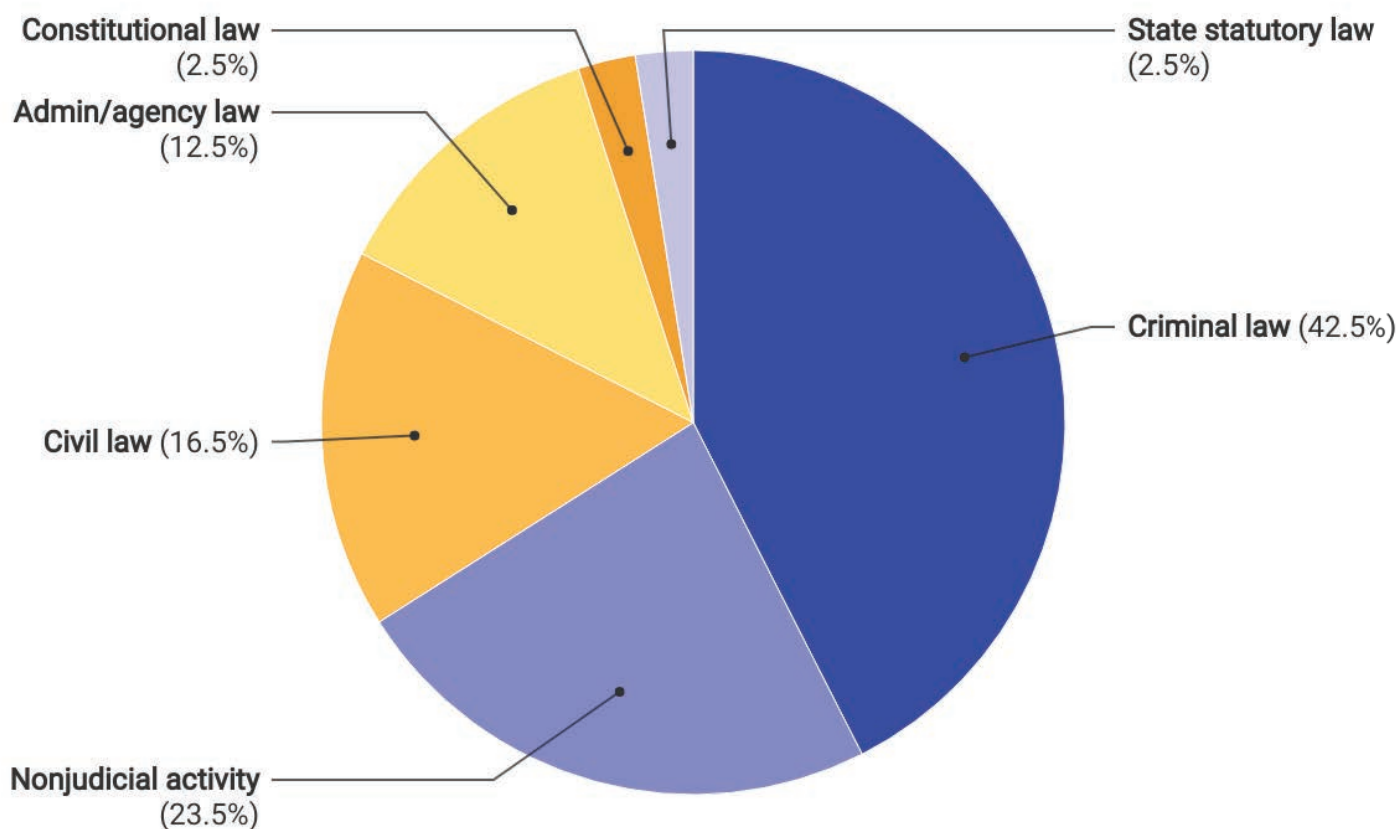
### Lone dissenter

In 2020, four cases before the Kentucky Supreme Court were decided 6-1. Justice Lambert was a lone dissenter in two of those cases. In our *Ballotpedia Courts: State Partisanship* study, Justice Lambert recorded a Mild Democratic Confidence Score.

### COURT JURISDICTION

All appeals involving imprisonment for 20 years or more, life imprisonment, or the death penalty go directly to the Kentucky Supreme Court; all other appeals are heard by the lower courts, and are only permitted to be heard by the supreme court if the court of appeals consents.

## Case types decided by Kentucky Supreme Court, 2020



The most common case category heard by the Kentucky Supreme Court in 2020 was criminal law. Of the 200 cases it heard, 85 were criminal cases, or 42.5 percent of its total caseload for the year. A criminal case involves a final criminal appeal before the court of last resort.

The second most common cases that reached the supreme court were nonjudicial activity law. A case is considered nonjudicial activity if it does not involve a formal hearing and discussion before the court. The Kentucky Supreme Court heard 47 nonjudicial activity cases in 2020, or 23.5 percent of its total caseload for the year.

The third most common cases that reached the court were civil cases. A civil case is one that involves a dispute between two parties, one of whom seeks reparations or damages. The Kentucky Supreme Court heard 33 civil cases in 2020, or 16.5 percent of its total caseload for the year.